

By Amy Byrnes

Ironically, for the Chinese-born owner of Biotech Atlantic Inc. in Eatontown, the majority of the competition he faces in the industry is from his home country.

But Francis Deng, who emigrated to this country 30 years ago, is proud that the plastic coverings of the various diagnostic test kits manufactured at the company's Industrial Way East site are stamped with the "Made in the USA" guarantee.

The company exports its tests – which include pregnancy tests, ovulation predictors and rapid screen tests –under the UniMark label overseas that accounts for about 90 percent of its business.

During an Aug. 18 tour of his facility with Rep. Rush Holt, Deng stressed that the U.S. government needed to do more to protect American made companies from foreign competitors who steal intellectual property and documentation to pass their goods off as American made.

The 12th District congressman was touring local businesses last week to get a feel for the state of manufacturing prior to a forum at Rutgers University with manufacturing leaders, workers, and educators to discuss job creation at Rutgers University on Aug. 24.

Biotech Atlantic was awarded the U.S. Export Achievement Certificate from the U.S Department of Commerce, in a ceremony in April, which was presented by Holt. The award recognizes U.S. companies that successfully penetrate international markets for distribution of their products.

Deng and four of his employees, all of Chinese descent, were visibly excited to welcome the congressman last Thursday, with signs hung on the wall welcoming Holt and enthusiastic applause when he arrived.

"It's a special day," said Deng of the congressman's visit.

Although the number of employees at the company has dropped from 30 to eight since Biotech opened its doors in 1992, it's working with the Commerce Department to increase growth. It uses a site in Hazlet as its warehouse and storage facility but researches and produces all products at its Eatontown location.

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